Field Notes

In an effort to share some of the natural history observations made during the sea scallop survey, we have requested that the Chief Scientists on each part of the cruise comment on some of the more interesting catches that were brought aboard the *FRV ALBATROSS IV*.

We're watching!
During Leg I, eight special tows were completed at depths of 50 to 100 meters by deploying an underwater camera mounted on the dredge's gooseneck. The camera was mounted in such a way so that the dredge was observed during important phases of the tow: while on the way to the bottom, during the tow and once it came off the bottom. The camera information will be synchronized with other data collected during the tow including the inclinometer and a timed trawl event which captures data from the vessel's Shipboard Computing System sensors. This information will help to give us an idea about the dredge's efficiency and the actual time the dredge is fishing on the bottom.

Migration observed.
On the first tow of the survey in the Mid-Atlantic offshore waters, we were invaded by a swarm of moths. There were literally thousands of them. Attracted by the lights, they covered almost every inch of the overhead on the sampling deck and in the wet lab.

What a difference a year makes.
The very strong recruitment of young scallops observed during the 2003 survey throughout most portions of the Mid-Atlantic was not repeated this year. However in those areas of especially strong recruitment last year, there were catches around 10 to 13 thousand scallops in the range of 1.3 - 3 inches (32 - 77 millimeters). While juvenile scallop catches were also poor on Georges Bank, catches of larger scallops in the three groundfish closed areas remained very high.

Moving haddock.
Juvenile haddock previously found in the Mid-Atlantic were noticeably absent this year. In fact, we did not catch any haddock south of the Nantucket Lightship but haddock encountered within the Lightship closed area ranged in size from 9 - 10 inches (23 - 26 centimeters). However, the strong one year-old haddock year-class seen last year as early juveniles was regularly observed again on Georges Bank.

Constituent Involvement.
James Kendall, a commercial scallop Captain for 35 years and who served two terms as a member of the New England Fishery Management Council, sailed on leg 2. Jim provided valuable feedback to the scientists and crew on how to improve some gear handling aspects on the *FRV Albatross IV*. He mentioned that he was impressed with the performance of the research vessel, the standard scallop gear and the dedication and hard work of the scientists. The Scallop Plan and Development Team Chair, Andrew Applegate, and the NEFSC principal stock assessment biologist, Devorah Hart, also participated on this survey leg.

Rock Chain testing.
The rock chain experiment continued during leg 2 of the survey. We conducted 26 additional paired tows in the Great South Channel area. This was part of the process to develop a calibration factor for the rock chain gear. 2004 marked the first time the rock chain rigged scallop dredge was deployed in the Great South Channel as the standard gear. This change was implemented after review of the experimental protocol and associated statistical analyses by the 39th Northeast Regional Stock Assessment Workshop.

Lawrence Brady
Chief Scientist
Survey Part I
508-495-2145
Larry.Brady@noaa.gov

Victor Nordahl
Chief Scientist
Survey Part II
508-495-2334
Vic.Nordahl@noaa.gov